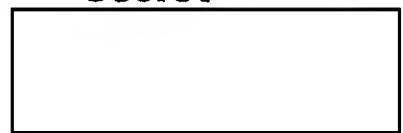


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USSR - Middle East: Soviet propaganda on the Middle East is growing harsher as Moscow awaits Washington's decision on whether to give additional aircraft to Israel.

A TASS statement on Monday, probably triggered by the Israeli air attack on an Egyptian factory last week, was one of the toughest Soviet commentaries in recent months. It specifically pledged the Arabs the necessary support to defend themselves and also denounced Israel's military activities in uncommonly strong terms. The statement deviated somewhat from earlier Soviet pronouncements by giving only the barest nod to the need for a political settlement in the Middle East.

Pravda's Cairo correspondent on 12 February had warned that Israel's deep penetration raids into Egypt and a US decision to sell more Phantoms and Skyhawks to Tel Aviv would be answered by increased Soviet support for the Arabs. Moreover, the periodical New Times on the same day warned of the danger of appeasing aggressors and pledged that the USSR considers "many-sided" assistance to the Arabs its "international debt." Other publications in recent days have hinted that at this stage neither restoration of the cease-fire nor a limitation on arms is acceptable to the Kremlin.

Soviet propaganda still appears intended to increase pressure on Israel to stop its raids and to deter the US from approving Tel Aviv's request for additional aircraft. [redacted]

[redacted] the propaganda suggests that the Russians may feel greater compulsion to give the Arabs more sophisticated means of defense if the US decision is positive. [redacted]

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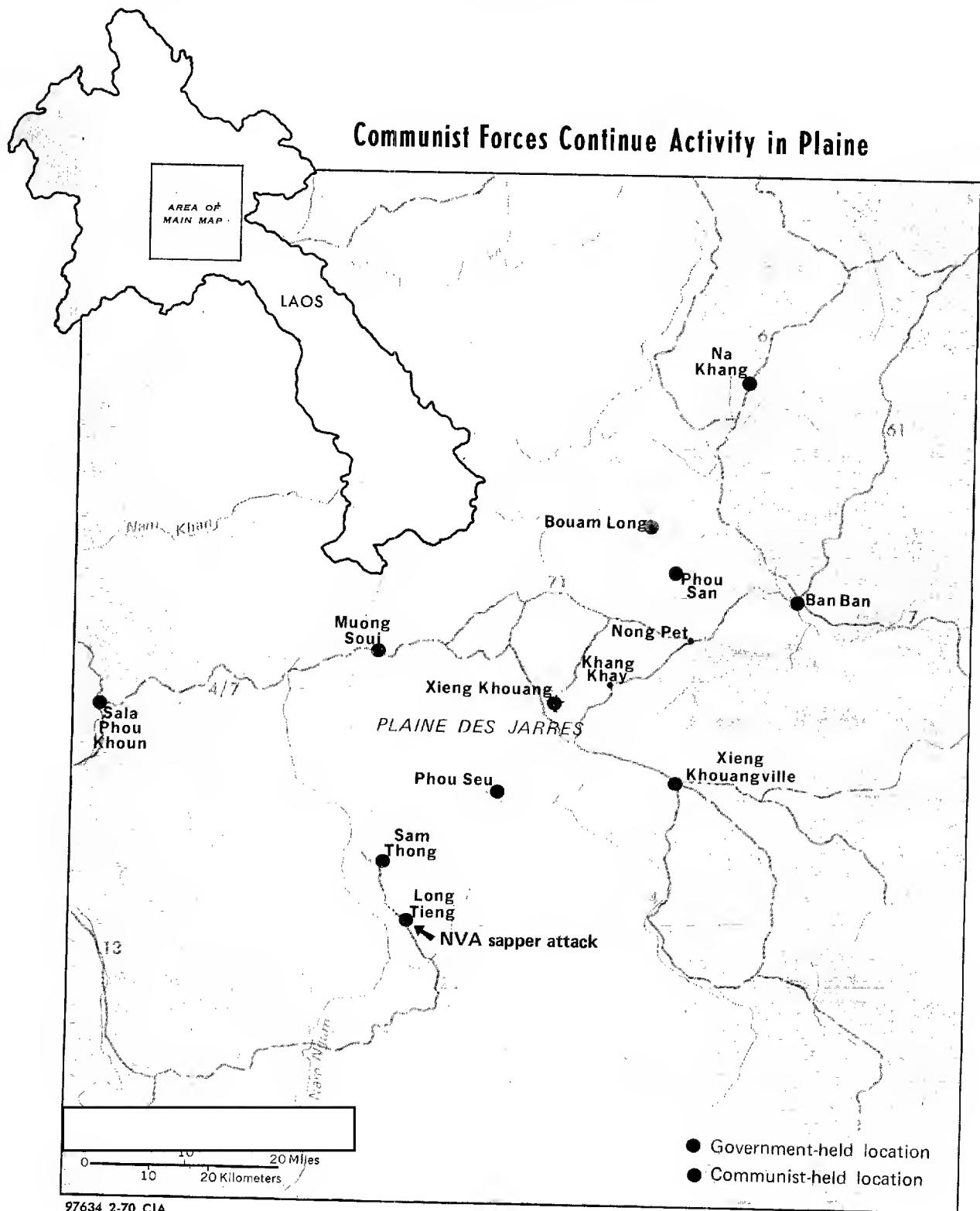
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Laos: Communist forces are pressing their advantage in the Plaine des Jarres area, although there has been no major ground action.

A small North Vietnamese sapper team raided the air base at Long Tieng during the evening of 17 February, destroying one observation aircraft. Four of the attackers, believed to be North Vietnamese, were killed while the government lost one officer. Although damage was light, the raid was the first enemy attack on Long Tieng. Small North Vietnamese reconnaissance groups have been reported in the area before, however.

Long Tieng, the key to Vang Pao's effort in the northeast, is defended by about 1,000 troops. The attack was probably intended to confuse Vang Pao's forces and to compel the Meo leader to pull troops off the Plaine to defend the large numbers of Meos in the Long Tieng area.

At this time there is no evidence to suggest the enemy is prepared to initiate a major thrust at Long Tieng. The rugged and unfamiliar terrain between Long Tieng and the Plaine present a formidable obstacle to any large-scale enemy operations in this area. In addition, the complex of Meo villages surrounding the base would make it extremely difficult for the enemy to move into the area in strength without the government having adequate warning.

The situation around Xieng Khouang airstrip appears to have eased somewhat. A battalion of enemy troops, which had dug in close to the airfield, was driven off early this morning. Government troops are in pursuit of the Communist force.

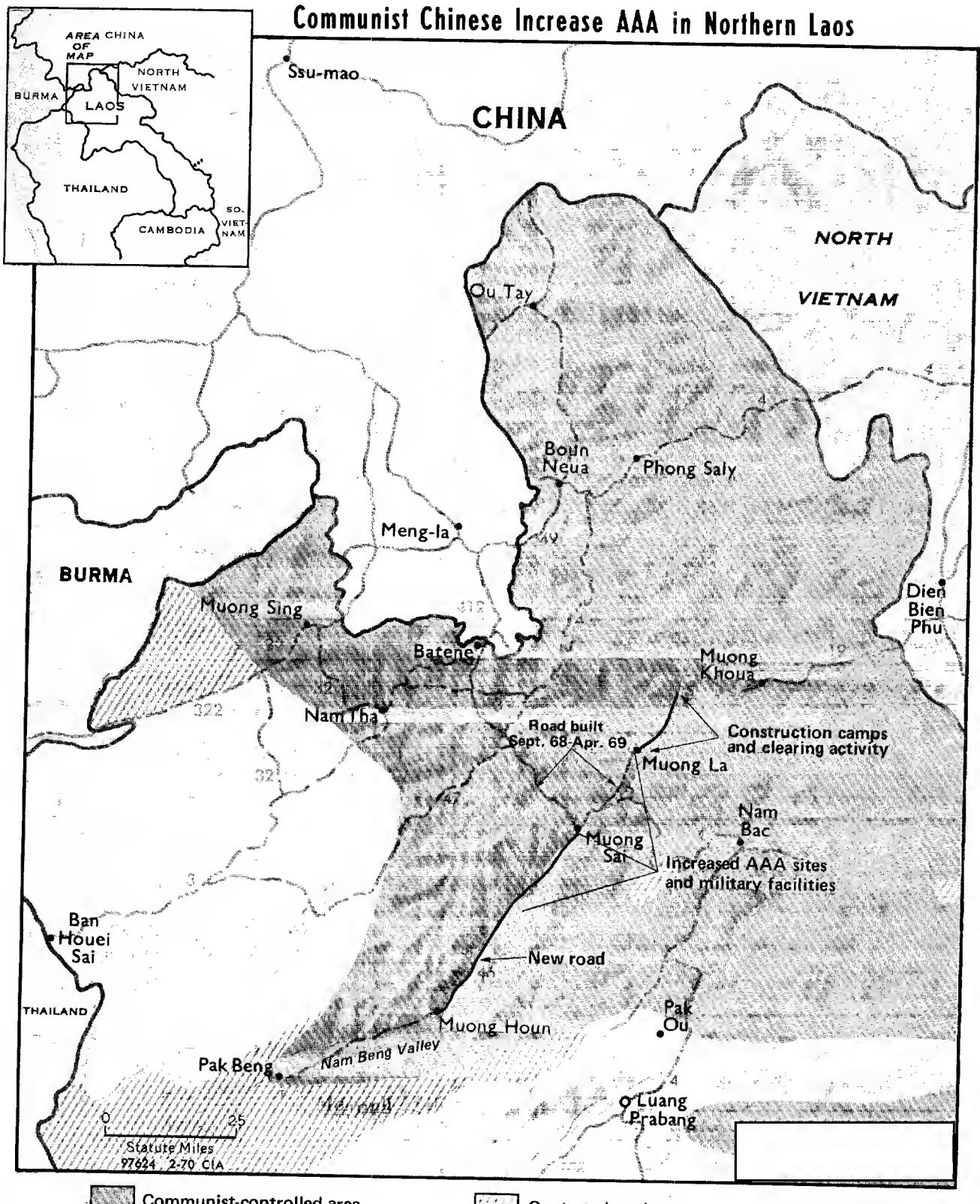
[redacted] [redacted]
the government's air operations are inflicting heavy casualties on North Vietnamese forces. The Communists appear willing to accept these losses, however. [redacted] [redacted] (Map) [redacted]

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Communist China - Laos: A recent increase in the Chinese Communist antiaircraft artillery force in northern Laos has raised the estimate of Chinese troops in the country to 8-10,000 from the earlier figure of 5-7,000.

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[redacted] the Chinese AAA force deployed in Laos to support Chinese road construction is larger than a normal division. The number of occupied Chinese AAA sites has more than tripled since mid-December 1969, with the greatest increase in the Muong Sai - Muong La areas, as well as along the new road to Muong Houn. These sites provide additional security for the major road bridges at Muong Sai and Muong La. They also protect Chinese bivouac areas, storage sites, and construction camps. These facilities have grown considerably since September 1969 when road construction resumed on a large scale. They extend along the new construction as far as Muong Houn and well past Muong La.

The Chinese forces include AAA, construction, and security troops. [redacted]
(Map)

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Chile-USSR: A cultural and scientific agreement signed in Moscow recently will increase Soviet opportunities in Chile.

The agreement, announced during the visit to Moscow of Education Minister Pacheco, provides for cooperation in public health and medicine, astrophysics, geochemistry, tectonic mapping, and other scientific projects, and in university training and cultural areas. Negotiations began soon after the two countries re-established relations nearly five years ago. The major difficulty was Chile's insistence that exchanges must be channeled through the government, a precaution designed to prevent domination of the program by Chile's influential Communists.

A growing role in intellectual and scientific activities has thus far been the Soviets' most effective accomplishment in Chile. Trade has not prospered, and a credit and technical agreement has hardly been used. Soviet officials seem well informed on Chilean politics, but in this field they operate through the large Communist Party.

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Yugoslavia-USSR: Tito's likely decision, [redacted]

[redacted] to attend the Lenin centennial on 22 April could serve to ease Soviet-Yugoslav tensions. The Yugoslavs feel they can attend an open gathering of this type without compromising their principles. Tito will go to Moscow prepared to rebuff any Soviet effort to make him change his independent stance. His presence will insure that Romania's Ceausescu, who is also expected to be on hand, will have an ally in resisting any potential pressure. [redacted]

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USSR-Cuba: A Soviet trade official has announced that the 1970 trade protocol signed on 16 February calls for total trade to reach \$1.3 billion. This represents a 50-percent increase over 1969. All of the increase apparently will be accounted for by higher Cuban sugar deliveries to the USSR. A Moscow press announcement states that the agreement calls for Soviet imports of up to five million tons of sugar. Less than 1.5 million tons were shipped last year. [redacted]

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